

★  
**FMLN**

**COMMANDER  
FERMAN  
CIENFUEGOS  
SPEAKS:**



"Sooner or later the forces of change will take power in El Salvador...There is something which keeps imperialism from opening its eyes to the march of history: it is the steadfast, narrow bond that it inevitably maintains with the oppressive and exploitative forces of the dependent capitalist countries. This makes imperialism the number one public enemy of Humanity.

THE MARCH OF HISTORY NEVER STOPS...

EL SALVADOR WILL WIN!!!"

*Fernan Cienfuegos*





**Commander Ferman Cienfuegos**



# **COMMANDER FERMAN CIENFUEGOS SPEAKS:**



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## FOREWORD

In order to make every effort to inform objectively about the events of our country, CASA EL SALVADOR presents a collection of documents which have appeared in different news media. These documents represent the official position of the General Command of the Farabundo Marti Front for National Liberation (FMLN). In five of them, the spokesperson is Commander Ferman Cienfuegos, one of the most distinguished leaders in Salvadorean history.

Therefore, we are pleased to present these documents to the English-speaking world. The contents of these documents shed light on important events and positions of El Salvador's revolutionary process, especially the period since January 1981.

The first document is an interview which took place in February 1981, still in the heat of battle of the January Offensive. The rest of the documents were made public in the following months. These documents clarify the internal and external situation of El Salvador and give insight into the character of our revolution. They unmask the maneuvers of the oligarchy, the fascist military, and imperialism. They illustrate how our heroic people are taking up the strategy and tactics of Popular Revolutionary War necessary for



legitimate defense. Above all, they pose the most important strategic necessity for the guarantee of victory: unity. This is the monolithic unity of all the Salvadorean people and their organizations which make up the FMLN-FDR, and also the monolithic unity of all the peoples of the world in militant solidarity with our suffering people and their legitimate representatives, the FMLN and the FDR.

The Solidarity Committee

"Commander Ernesto Jovel"

Member of CASA EL SALVADOR

Los Angeles, California, U.S.A.

March 1982

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF COMMANDER FERMAN CIENFUEGOS

Commander Ferman Cienfuegos was born March 6, 1947, and graduated from "Externado San Jose" High School in the city of San Salvador.

In 1965, he began his participation in the popular struggle in the university student movement. Around 1967-68, when the student movement extended beyond the university walls to join the teachers' and workers' struggles, Ferman Cienfuegos worked in organizing clandestine cells of workers, peasants and students, mainly in the province of San Vicente.

In 1969, he left his study of medicine and sociology, and contributed to the formation of the first nucleus of revolutionaries. They had already taken the firm decision to promote the strategy of Popular Revolutionary War.

In 1970, he was a member of what was known as "El Grupo" (The Group), an organization which resulted from the merging of the revolutionary youth of that time and the radicalized Christian sectors. "El Grupo" was the first revolutionary seed to carry out political-military activities. Their most famous action was the capture of the Salvadorean pro-fascist oligarch, Ernesto Regalado Duenas. Because of that action, \$10,000 was offered for information leading to the capture of Ferman Cienfuegos, Lil Milagro Ramirez, Carlos Alberto Menjivar, and their other companions.



In 1971, he was promoted to the leadership of an organization with a federative character, which was the ERP (Revolutionary Army of the People) of that time. That ERP brought together the main political-military nuclei of El Salvador. He participated actively in military actions with many of the heroes of the Salvadorean revolution, including particularly Carlos Alberto Menjivar and Gilberto Orellana, who fell in combat.

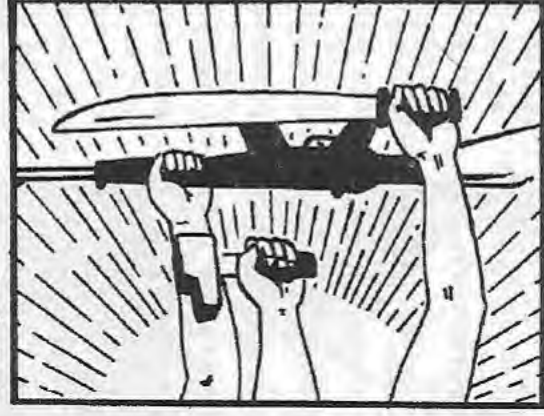
From 1972 to 1977, he was committed to the organizational work and the development of the strategic line of the powerful political-military organization that since 1975 has been called the National Resistance (RN), and its armed wing, the Armed Forces of National Resistance (FARN). He was also a member of the editorial staff of Por la Causa Proletaria (For the Proletarian Cause), the official voice of the RN-FARN. During all that time he carried out intensive organizational work throughout the country, especially in Usulután, Santa Ana and San Salvador. He participated in all kinds of military actions and in the creation of Escuelas de Formación Militar (Military Training Schools). An important task within his organizational work was the creation of the first cell of Proletarian Vanguard (V.P.), together with Commander Ernesto Jovel Funes (who was killed in struggle in 1980), Pancho and Roque Dalton. That cell was considered the origin of the labor activity of the National Resistance, the Unified Popular Action Front (FAPU), and the National Federation of Salvadorean Workers' Unions (FENASTRAS).

From 1977 to 1979, also with Commander Ernesto Jovel, he directed the work of the RN-FARN towards the

formation of the Popular Army and of the creation of a "war fund," strategic steps in the Salvadorean revolutionary process. He also had many important tasks at the international level.

From 1980 on, he centered his efforts mainly in the preparation for the General Offensive, which started January 10, 1981.

With the death of Commander Ernesto Jovel Funes, the leader of the National Resistance, Ferman Cienfuegos took on the main responsibility in that organization, and in 1981 he was elected: Secretary General of the National Resistance, General Commander of the Armed Forces of National Resistance, and member of the General Command of the Farabundo Martí Front for National Liberation (FMLN).



**RN — FARN**



## THE WESTERN FRONT "FELICIANO AMA"

The Western Front bears the name of the indigenous leader Jose Feliciano Ama, who on the night of January 22, 1932, leading 2,000 Indians armed with machetes, shotguns, axes and revolvers, took the town of Izalco and held it for three days.

The superiority of the dictatorship's weapons was the reason for the defeat of Ama, who courageously stayed in the rearguard covering the retreat of his companions. He was captured and hung from a tree in the central park of Izalco.

The Western Front comprises the provinces of Santa Ana, Ahuachapán and Sonsonate. The FMLN has several strongholds located mainly in the north of Santa Ana province, near the city of Metapan and Cutumay Camones Hill. In the coastal zone of Ahuachapán and Sonsonate, forces of the FMLN have much maneuvering capacity and great popular support. In several actions, mainly during January 1981, they fought fierce battles in Bola de Monte, Acajutla and other places along the coast.

Also in Santa Ana province, in the beginning of the Great General Offensive (January 1981), dramatic and exemplary insurrectional actions took place in the cities of Atiquizaya, Chalchuapa and in the city of Santa Ana itself. In that city, there was an uprising in the barracks of the 2nd Infantry Brigade and together with many soldiers, Captains Marcelo Cruz and Francisco Mena Sandoval abandoned the genocidal government army and went over to the ranks of the FMLN.



## THE OFFENSIVE OF JANUARY 1981

### THE SALVADOREAN PEOPLE WANT THEIR LIBERATION

#### I. Background

**QUESTION:** If we take into consideration the political-military developments in 1980, we could say that everything was directed towards the planning of the offensive which was begun in January 1981. Nevertheless, there is evidence that the intention was to launch a general offensive even earlier (in 1980). Was the effort to initiate it not feasible, and if so, what were the criteria to postpone it? It would be important that you develop an overall analysis that permits us to grasp the development of the situation in its political context, so that we can put the specific events in perspective.

**FERMAN CIENFUEGOS:** The requirements and prerequisites of a subjective character that we were dealing with occupied us for the whole of 1980, but at the same time, we had the intention of pushing and preparing the strategy of the offensive. True, there were attempts to launch an offensive that year, but we were still experiencing a situation which reflected an imbalance in the development of the power of the masses and military power. There was also in 1980 an effort to organize mass demonstrations, to keep the masses in the streets, to exercise their right to strike. We



attempted general strikes several times: on May 17th, in June, in August.

This analysis explains why there were situations in which, for example, it was possible to carry out a general strike that did not develop into an **insurrection**. It was a question of a political strike without military support.

In 1980, the effort of the Unified Revolutionary Directorate (DRU) was to develop the insurrection and the general strike, the more advanced steps within the strategy of **Popular Revolutionary War**. However, these steps were not implemented fully because they were developed unevenly. In other words, the general strike ran ahead of us; we didn't implement the insurrection, nor was the structure of our army prepared for it.

Q: Nevertheless, the structuring of the Popular Army was a continuing project, and not something that was begun in 1980. Can you talk about that?

FC: That is a task that began in 1970, but it was not until 1980, beginning in August, that we dedicated ourselves to it with greater intensity. We concentrated our efforts on establishing within our ranks the lines of command, the steps towards unity, the formation of the troops, schools and encampments. This was a task that would allow us to accumulate military strength in different areas of the country while we were developing a **war plan**, with the knowledge that we were going on the offensive.

## II. The Beginning of the Offensive

### 1. The Plan

Q: Now that some time has elapsed since the implementation of the plan, could you make an outline of it, looking into its strengths and weaknesses?

FC: In the situation as it was in 1980, we felt that, strategically, we were following a plan that was offensive and defensive at the same time. The enemy, on their part, had taken the initiative and strategically had been on the offensive all year long, but only militarily, because politically we had the advantage.

We have to recognize that the enemy had us on the defensive, practically speaking. It had tried to destroy us in April and May. In December, it launched an offensive of annihilation and destruction against us, but it failed.

The enemy is now regrouping. Actually, it has been doing this since November of 1980. In that sense, we, in elaborating the war plan that we approved on December 13th and 14th, had decided to launch an offensive. Our leadership in the FMLN had not spoken of a final offensive but of a plan to take the offensive that was going to be like a first wave, the starting point, and we were able to launch it on January 10th, 1981.

The design of the battle plan was to push the Revolutionary War by means of operations and attacks on diverse barracks and enemy positions, with the idea of



ambushing the reinforcements of those posts. The objective was to annihilate the manpower of the enemy. On the other hand, we had a plan for an uprising in the enemy barracks combined with partial and general insurrection, and the calling for a general political strike.

These were the fundamental aspects of the approved plan. It was implemented on January 10th, and now everyone knows about its national scope: the numerous simultaneous operations; the high degree of fire power used, from guns to artillery, including rocket launchers.

The enemy knew something of our plan, even some dates, because in an organization where an army, a militia and the people are participating and preparing, some things leak out. The enemy attempted to attack before we did, making a few attempts here and there, but in general terms the dynamics, the uncontrollable force of the offensive, took the enemy by surprise and we were able, in the first 48 hours, to take the initiative and move to a strategic offensive. We considered that to be the most important thing at the moment. The whole world awaited a second, a third wave. But we did not. We knew that this first wave was going to serve us in mounting the strategy of the offensive.

That was the initial step. From that point on, we have been working since those first 48 hours to build an offensive strategy. Obviously, as a result of the enthusiasm and the expectations of the first week, it was believed that victory could be swift, immediate or in a short time, and that the enemy army was going to be toppled with that first wave.

Undoubtedly, if the U.S. government had not intervened beginning with January 15th (which is when their military aid, their advisers, and all their logistical support began), the enemy army would have continued to stagger, as it only continues to be sustained by that aid.

## 2. From Siege to Ambush

Q: Now that you have sketched the general picture of the offensive of January, would it be possible to make a military evaluation of it and to state its correlation with the response of the organized masses?

FC: After the passing of all this time, we consider one of the principal errors to be that our forces entangled themselves in the siege of the military barracks and did not concentrate on ambushes of the enemy army. That entanglement even impeded the assaulting of barracks at times. That made it such that we did not completely and correctly make use of the military victory we had obtained. This led us to make rectifications while on the move and we gave orders to concentrate our efforts on the ambushing of enemy forces, which were put into practice on the 20th.

We began to concentrate on ambushing, along with the recovery of enemy arms; on liquidating, or at least wearing down their forces. In any event, that is the error that we consider the most important. The results and the effectiveness of our actions would have been 100 times greater if those entanglements had not occurred.



### 3. The Zones of Control

From the time of that rectification of the emphasis of our tactics up until the present, an important process of consolidation of military positions began to unfold. A series of war fronts, of military pockets, began to take form. We do not speak of "liberated zones" but of **zones of control**. That is, zones such as those that have appeared since the first days of this period, that are organized under poder local (local power committees).

In the end, what we have obtained is the consolidation of a series of war fronts that have zones of control. Presently, these are the zones of: Guazapa, Chalatenango, Morazan, the Conchagua Volcano, Usulután, the San Vicente Volcano, the San Pedro Hills, Cabanas and the zone of resistance in the capital.

Altogether, there are eight fronts which have lines of defense; the enemy can try to enter but cannot leave. These zones are organized under poder local: the militias for local defense, war production, health and education. These areas, if they were to be put together, would cover one eighth of the territory of El Salvador.

So, in these zones, systems and lines of defense are organized in such a way that the enemy, as we said before, is unable to enter there freely because of the danger of being ambushed along the access routes. This explains why the North Americans, headed by Richard Allen and William Casey of the CIA, place so much emphasis on the use of the air force, of helicopters. The North Americans know that they

cannot enter with infantry, and so what they are doing is looking for a way to enter by air, to penetrate the zones of control, to try to "temper" them. They are using their experience or at least something of their experience from the Vietnam War. Regarding the capital, as yet we don't have control. We control the most densely populated neighborhoods; we control them during the night.

Q: The consolidation of control that is being built by the forms of popular power must have been evaluated, in the quantitative as well as qualitative aspects. Based on that evaluation, would you say that the control of the zones is progressing, or is it stagnating?

FC: It is progressing. Today we are working on the fundamental task of consolidation of those zones of control. Also, it is natural that the definition of their limits or borders does not depend solely on our determination of them, but on the action of the enemy as well.

There are zones of control where the enemy does not enter with ease and there are zones of dispute. There is an ebb and flow to the borderlines of the war.

### 4. The Methods of War

Q: You are sketching a panorama in which the popular forces have taken control of certain zones. That signifies, of course, a military organization that already relies on regular forces, which requires a considerable number of combatants.



Understanding that you cannot give precise figures for military reasons, could you give us an estimation of the conditions in which you are functioning?

FC: There are many figures to consider. We have 4,000 armed guerrillas and we have gathered together more than 5,000 members of the militia. Depending on the situation, we use a regular or an irregular structure. And even more, we are organizing the local power structures and the defense of the population. One of the most important characteristics in these pockets where the Popular Army is surging forward is that we have to defend the population. The high concentration of the population, the geographical size of the Salvadorean territory, make it so that we are fighting side by side with the population.

This is a very peculiar phenomenon of the Salvadorean war. One cannot separate the war from the masses. Undoubtedly, in the development of every popular war, there is a sector of the masses who are only bystanders because of the effects of terror. But this now becomes a political problem.

The results of the offensive are concretely the consolidation of these pockets of control. This consolidation requires on-going warfare. The command has used or has developed a whole range of experience to direct regular or irregular forces in such a small territory where there are no mountains. There is a saying, "The mountains are the people"—yes. We fight together with the people. The enemy conducts the war with indiscriminate bombardment. It kills

women, children, the elderly; it uses tactics of destruction. In the summer, it destroys and burns the dry areas in the zones of control, which is a tactic for destroying the sources of food.

This on-going warfare results in the consolidation of the fronts and zones of geographic and political control. The war process has developed the attack capacity of our regular and irregular forces. We have combined **guerrilla warfare** with **mobile warfare** and we are arriving at the point of defining some positions. This is true even though at this point we have only zones of control in which we apply the tactics of mobile warfare, and not the tactics of a **war of positions**. The fundamental aspect of the tactics and strategy that we are using is that of mobile warfare. It gives us great mobility and impedes the enemy from finding a military solution. If the enemy enters a zone of control, we apply guerrilla warfare and we attack the enemy by applying mobile warfare. That is why we say that time is on our side. We can go on fighting for years, although we are not in favor of prolonging the war. The social cost is very great. They are punishing the civilian population. Of the total casualties, our military casualties are less than 5%. Up to now, our forces are intact, the commands as well as the troops.

In summary, this can be the process of the offensive up to now. It is necessary to remember that we are not saying we have achieved a military victory over the enemy; what we have accomplished is a military advance. What has occurred is that we have taken the initiative in the strategic field, in



strategic operations, and we have begun to play, as they say, "in time and space," in the field and with the enemy.

Undoubtedly, the greatest problem at this moment is the collaboration of Guatemala and Honduras. In the zones where the Salvadorean Army has problems in the ratio of forces, those countries intervene with their forces. Honduras conducts border raids and gives air support to the Salvadorean Army. Guatemala does the same. Fundamentally, they are adding to the ratio of internal forces and the possibility of a more open intervention cannot be dismissed. The Honduran raids are surprise attacks, which they learned about in the training they received from the Israelis.

## 5. Popular Participation

Q: We would like you to analyze the beginning of the offensive now from the point of view of the participation of the masses. What was it like in the first days and later, in the development of the process?

FC: We have also made an evaluation of that. It was in the plan for a political strike where a fundamental error was made. The insurrection in the capital lasted two days and the political strike was called for publicly and in the labor unions for the 12th and the 13th. At that moment the insurrection in the neighborhoods was already reaching the point of retreat.

We recognize that it was an error to have resorted to the classic form of calling for a strike. Undoubtedly, the strike took place, but it didn't turn into a general strike. Its effect was absorbed by the control, the manipulation, of official propaganda, by the actions of the enemy's communications media, which minimized the strike's extent and impact.

In spite of the insurrectional factors which were achieved in the first 48 hours when the mass of strikers stayed away from work, the strike was diluted. Its impact was lost in the liberated neighborhoods. In essence, it was not incorporated into the insurrectional process. There was a setback there. Because of this, the strike was not effective in the capital, although in other cities like Santa Ana where the insurrection lasted longer the strike was incorporated into it and had more effect.

The idea is that an insurrection integrates the entire working class, that the workers join the insurrectional neighborhoods. But there was a setback and the enemy used it to announce that we had no support. And this was most evident in the capital, which is a little like the international showcase of El Salvador, a political and military center of repercussion, but which doesn't reflect what is really occurring in the whole country. The international press is there and its coverage is conditioned by the military, which organizes its visits and tours.

There is no question that from the third day after the beginning of the offensive, the capital city had entered a phase of "normalcy," that is to say, what is called normalcy



in San Salvador. That in fact could have been considered a political reversal for us, but we are recovering with a mass line, with participation from the masses in acts of sabotage. At this moment, the working class is carrying out sabotage and engaging in purposely unproductive work.

Also, the participation of the day laborers, poor peasants and medium peasants is decisive. In all the zones of control, the peasants are participating in the local power structures, in the mass organizations, in the militias, or incorporating themselves into the Popular Army.

On the other hand, many people from the middle classes have incorporated themselves into the struggle. Doctors, engineers, architects, teachers, students are working in the fronts. They have moved into them and continue integrating themselves into the **Active Resistance** that we are conducting. This resistance is incorporated into the strategy of the offensive. Today, the **Active Resistance** of the masses, in reality, has become clandestine. The enemy actually has hit the mass organizations hard; whole leaderships of public employees, the banking industry and teachers' unions have been murdered. Today organizational tasks, including the preparation for a regular strike, are done clandestinely. Also, the Christian-based communities in the neighborhoods and many priests are participating and have incorporated themselves into the **Active Resistance**.

Finally, the incorporation, the collaboration and the coordination of the small and medium business sectors has been slower. The process of war has slowed down their incorporation, but there are political alliances around the

economic plan of the future government, and they understand that a new government like the one we propose would benefit them. In this moment of crisis, the small and medium business sectors are affected by the lack of credit, by the failure of small and medium size businesses, by the arbitrary raids, martial law and the general instability that is prevalent. Based on this, we always say that they are and will be an active part of the new economic, political and social plan.

### III. The Political Solution

**Q:** Okay. Let's go on to another subject, if you have no objections. It is known that there is a proposal for negotiations to reach a political solution to the conflict. I believe it is important to analyze that aspect thoroughly. Could you explore the fundamental principles of that proposal?

**FC:** What we have proposed is mediation. Our point of departure is that there is world-wide recognition that there are two belligerent forces. On our part, we recognize our responsibilities, national as well as international; among the latter, the danger of the regionalization of the conflict. We also know that we have power, that we are a force. There is dual power in the country, and we therefore consider that a political solution to the conflict could occur. In this sense, we have proposed that the problem does not have to be approached with only a military solution in mind. We are not



idealists nor are we adventurers to think that such a tiny country is going to militarily defeat imperialism. From the military point of view, we are not a power capable of defeating U.S. imperialism, but it is necessary to cause it a political defeat. Small nations have shown U.S. imperialism that it can be defeated politically. There are two such examples on our continent.

There exists then an international consensus that it is necessary to negotiate, to have mediation. There is the probability of intervention and we believe that it is necessary to immediately avoid this danger, as it would bring as a consequence the regionalization of the conflict. Honduras and Guatemala would have to intervene and Nicaragua's stability would be affected. We want peace and tranquility for our people by establishing a new society, a new government. That is our responsibility, and therefore we are proposing a way out of this conflict through the process of mediation which should have a negotiation phase and must favor our people and guarantee this process.

Q: Nevertheless, negotiation is a complex process. Not only in finding the basic conditions, but afterwards in the steps that should follow, the obstacles that have to be eliminated, and finally, the definition of the parties involved.

FC: In the first place, the conditions or the political climate that would guarantee the negotiation process between the belligerent forces must exist, because there are fascist sectors that must first be ousted and punished. They are the

sectors that are impeding this process at this moment; they are the sectors that want to have a coup d'etat.

Certainly, it is a very complex negotiation. Besides the fascist sector of the Army, there is the group within the Army that identifies itself with Allen and Casey of the CIA that, in reality, is looking for a military solution. Our desire is that all the political and social forces participate in a national political-military scheme determined by the Salvadorean people, without military intervention by anyone, including the forces of the UN or the OAS. It is necessary to understand that just as the Nicaraguan phenomenon had its own forms and solutions, the Salvadorean process will have its own as well.

Q: The FDR has said, referring to the problem of intervention, that the dialogue is "with the puppeteers, not with the puppet," understanding that this dialogue should be the first step. You pointed out that this was the first aspect that needed to be dealt with.

FC: When we refer to the dialogue with the U.S. government, we refer to the fact that it has intervened, that it is necessary to negotiate for its withdrawal. The intervention has been a unilateral North American one, and therefore it must be resolved with them, even though they deny this and try to create the belief that they are not intervening.

Within all this, there is a point that also must not be forgotten. It is the embarrassing situation that faces the



Salvadorean Christian Democratic Party. Someone has created an image of a party that on one side is a prisoner of the fascists and serves the interests of the imperialists, and on the other is being pressured by the international Christian Democrats. This is a very compromising situation, where the Christian Democrats have played a role in creating the image that the junta has today. If the Christian Democrats were taken out of the junta, this image would crumble.

#### IV. Farabundismo

Q: Lately, there has been talk of **Farabundismo** almost as an ideology that transcends even the achievements of Farabundo Marti. You appear to have entered into a more complete elaboration of what Farabundismo is, that goes beyond his inspiring or exemplary figure. Yet, its features remain unclear. Does it mean more than a rescue of that historical figure for the struggle of the Salvadorean people? What is the scope of Farabundismo?

FC: Presently, we are developing the basis of the political ideology of Farabundismo. It is the national expression of our political and military phenomenon; it is a piece of our history; it's like a part of our national superstructure. That which is Sandinismo for the Nicaraguans is Farabundismo for us. Undoubtedly, both are the contemporary expressions of the struggles of the two peoples and their origin is clear: a revolutionary movement which was born from a core in which a personality was prominent. But here, the issue is not a

personality, but the total movement that contributes to the struggle and that through the years has been able to confirm and delineate a series of ideological and political tenets that constitute the basis of a new strategy for the revolution.

I would add that Farabundismo is the theory of the Salvadorean Revolution, but it needs to be developed further. In the first place, we need to understand that the first tenet of Farabundismo is internationalism. Another of the tenets is Central Americanism, from which is derived the conceptions of the defense of sovereignty, independence, self-determination, non-alignment, the conquest of peace and security in Central America, and political and military stability for our people and our region.

There is another aspect: the anti-oligarchic character of our struggle since the year 1930. The democratic and popular character of the state that must be constructed reflects the wide and pluralistic aspect of our revolutionary process. It also reflects the massive and organized participation of the Salvadorean people.

The worker-peasant alliance is also a unique and peculiar social characteristic of Farabundismo and a classical expression of our struggle. Farabundismo also allows the workers and peasants in alliance with the middle class: the petty bourgeoisie and the small and medium business sectors. In Farabundismo there also exists the distinctive form of incorporation of the Christian movements into our revolutionary process, and the important relations between the Church, the people and Farabundismo.



Well, Farabundismo is also found at the military level. It is reflected in revolutionary warfare--regular or irregular--which is a combination of guerrilla warfare, mobile warfare and a war of positions. In other words, Farabundismo explains how guerrilla warfare takes root in such a small country, so densely populated, where no one could imagine that this type of warfare could have developed, a type of warfare which doesn't break the laws of war but rather utilizes them. The great military concept is developed upon this political-ideological basis of Farabundismo. This military concept is a trilogy that combines revolutionary warfare with insurrection and with uprising in the barracks. This last element is the uprising of officers, middle-ranking officials and soldiers. This trilogy is the dialectical key to the military phenomenon.

This is nothing new. The insurrection of 1932 failed partly because the insurrection in the barracks failed. The insurrection of the masses occurred, but not that of the barracks. In the modern epoch, we have to combine the three factors and this is under way. But certainly, the determining factor for us is the Popular Army. However, this doesn't exclude the role of the uprising of officers, middle-ranking officials and soldiers. The uprising of a barrack has already occurred; its whole arsenal was sabotaged.

#### V. Pluralism in the Revolutionary Process

Q: Turning to the pluralistic character that the Salvadoreans attach to their process, to their revolutionary

movement, I believe that we should explore this characteristic more deeply. Historically, is this a pluralistic process?

FC: The confrontation, throughout fifty years, with the financial, industrial and coffee grower oligarchy, polarized the social struggle and obviously has had repercussions in the class composition of the different movements and even in the incorporation of the rural and urban working classes. This made it possible for these workers to incorporate themselves into the vanguard organizations. Some authors use this situation to try to portray the Salvadorean struggle as the classical struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. Even though it is true that our struggle has been the struggle of the industrial worker against the financial and industrial bourgeoisie, the struggle of the working class and the poor and medium peasantry against the agrarian bourgeoisie and the landowners, even though this struggle develops in classical terms, there is also an important ideological factor: it is eminently Christian, in a country where the social superstructure which has prevailed for fifty years is one of a fierce, blind and immeasurable anti-communism. This is particular to El Salvador and has its own characteristics, different from other countries. Anti-communism exists not only through propaganda, but is part of the social superstructure and political life.

Now, in regards to the social classes, the great worker-peasant alliance that we were able to build during all these years of work and organizing and that we were able to bring



into the war has a fundamental importance. The poor and medium peasantry is the most numerous social class, but the industrial working class has also played a decisive role in the cities of our country. The industrial working class has developed a high political consciousness, and has produced cadres which have reached the highest levels of the movement's leadership and whose participation in the elaboration of strategy and tactics has been remarkable.

There is another phenomenon: all of the middle sectors--teachers, students, priests, etc.--have been incorporated into the process. Because of this we say that this is not a linear process, where we have to define everything according to who is and who isn't Marxist-Leninist. What exists in the country is a revolutionary movement which recognizes a science, the only one there is, as a guide. But this science has a particularity, given the broad composition of this movement, where people who are Catholics, Protestants, Christians in general, are incorporated into the revolutionary process. I am also referring to the vanguard party structures, not only to those of the broad movement.

This political front is going to broaden even more, to include other social forces, from non-fascists to big and medium businessmen outside of the ruling bloc.

## VI. The Problems of Unity

Q: One last question with reference to the problem of unity. There are still problems at that level, whether in the

unified war plan or the political plan. Within this process of unity which continues to develop, which have been the main obstacles?

FC: Every process of unity and of unification of the dispersed vanguard has to possess an element of ideological struggle. In El Salvador, the struggle for a jointly elaborated social, economic and political plan has been the base on which we have had to advance towards political unification and coordinated action, until the conquest of a single organization.

There is no doubt that there have been difficulties, problems, crises. Revolutionaries never lie, nor hide problems, and besides, the revolutionary practice is to solve the crisis. Every solution is a qualitative leap in relation to the previous state in which we were. This has been the process: we were in crisis because not all the organizations were included, then because one or another organization was included, and also because of the change from one form of unity to another. But all this was also creating the means to solve the crisis and has allowed us a method of discussion to resolve the divergences. However, we do not start from divergent conceptions, but from coinciding viewpoints in fundamental strategy.

At this moment, our unity is indissoluble because we have a strategic objective that unites us, we have a unified plan. Divergences occur more than anywhere else in tactics, or at times in the nuances of operations themselves. Our ideological struggle has been very intense. If we look back at



earlier statements put forth before the process of unity began, we can clearly see this. This ideological struggle continues, but has changed qualitatively in the sense that it is carried out in order to advance. Today, the key is that even though problems exist, they are utilized to advance and not to retreat. At the tactical level there are always different evaluations of the juncture; this also implies different evaluations of the facts. At times it implies the necessity of arriving at a unitary conclusion that is defined by the plenum of the Unified Revolutionary Directorate (DRU) of fifteen members, the superior organism of the collective leadership. It makes decisions by consensus or vote.

I would say that even more problems will occur. We cannot be romantic in regards to unity. There are five different organizations, with different historical developments, diverse concepts, but which together have created a strategic plan and together have built an historic plan, a program, a form of government which proposes the construction of the Popular Army and formation of the single party of the revolution.

Finally, the pressure of the masses has played an important role in the advance of unity. Undoubtedly, what the people want to resolve as a people is their liberation; they want to resolve an historic problem. In this sense, the base is always more practical than the higher leadership. Therefore, what occurs is a contradiction between the discussions of the leadership and the great practical reasons of the base.

El Salvador, February 1981

Modesto Ramirez, a peasant from Soyapango, is another of our revolutionary heroes of the 1932 peasant uprising. "The shirt and pants I wear are borrowed. I was captured covered with rags, and that's how it's always been. When we hungry ones ask for a piece of tortilla, having lost even our shame, and from the doors of the rich we are turned away with the harsh and vile words: 'Lazy bum, why don't you look for a job?' This is our life..." These were practically Ramirez' last words, spoken just before he was executed.

The Central Front comprises the provinces of La Libertad, San Salvador, Cuscatlan and Chalatenango. In this front, the FMLN is strong in Chalatenango province in two large areas, one to the east of the province around Arcaatao and another to the north in the area of San Francisco Morazan. Guazapa Hill, another stronghold of our forces, is located about 20 kilometers from San Salvador. The hill, visible from the top of any tall building in San Salvador, is a silent

testimony of enormous popular power. A watchtower of freedom, it is watched angrily every day by Generals Gutierrez and Garcia, who must ask themselves why they have failed in 14 "search and destroy" operations against the area. The city of San Salvador is located in the front, surrounded by a popular barricade composed of the towns of San Antonio Abad, Soyapango, Cuscatancingo, Mejicanos, Chudad Credisa, Bosques del Matazano, etc.





## EL SALVADOR: THE CRISES OF OLIGARCHIC POWER AND IMPERIALIST DOMINATION

### I. The Internal Situation

The situation in El Salvador in recent months reflects a crisis of hegemony, an expression of the profound crisis of dependent capitalism in our country. Evidently, the disruption of all sources of capital accumulation is at the root of the social and political conflicts dominating the situation in El Salvador, where a fundamental class, the Salvadorean proletariat, and its allies are struggling to build a new, more just and democratic society.

The Salvadorean revolution has broken away from many models. Those who have wished to view our revolution in terms of the Sandinista model have not only shown the impossibility of such a transposition, but also risk falling into disillusionment and frustration. The Salvadorean situation is particularly complex and in order to get close to the reality of it one needs to relinquish certain stereotypes.

#### 1. The Crisis of Oligarchic Power; the Contradictions in the Ruling Bloc

El Salvador is experiencing a crisis of oligarchic power, which occurs at the level of articulation among the components of the ruling bloc: government-oligarchy-army-

Christian Democratic Party-United States government. What are the relationships between these sectors of the ruling bloc and what are their contradictions?

#### a) The Bourgeois-Oligarchic Sector

Since late 1980, the bourgeois-oligarchic sector has openly supported the junta. This sector is represented at the organizational level by the Alliance for Production (Alianza Productiva) and holds various key positions within the government. Nevertheless, their support for the junta's program is complex and contradictory, and inevitably carries within it the seeds of future conflict. The Alliance for Production supports the political goals of the Christian Democrats and the Army, predicated on defeating the revolutionary democratic movement, but it does not support the "communitarian" economic program championed by the Christian Democrats. The oligarchy would back up Duarte's plan to achieve a military defeat of the FMLN-FDR, but not that of the Christian Democrats.

What is the explanation for this? Let's not forget that, after all, the coup of October 15, 1979, signified a relative unhinging of the oligarchy's power, in that it was a new situation with less than ideal conditions. For the oligarchy it was a matter of recovering political positions, which they had not really lost but neither had they been able to effectively control. The representatives of the oligarchy's corporate interests, finding themselves in a delicate, complex and dangerous political situation, have been unable to reconcile these with their long-range goals.



This situation has caused shifts within the core of the oligarchy. Those with a more long-range political and economic approach (De Sola, Poma, etc.) have been pushed to the sidelines in many far-reaching decisions, while those with a "do-it-now" approach and the most bellicose tendencies have gained much ground. This latter sector of the oligarchy views the present situation as a process of recovering political power it nearly lost to the bourgeois-reformist sector of the oligarchy which the U.S. government had wanted to impose.

#### b) The Government

The genocidal junta is definitely unable to govern. That it has ever governed is questionable. The Christian Democratic military regime has no popular support whatsoever, nor any national or international credibility. The continuous crisis of the regime, marked by constant desertions of its administrators and by an incapacity to implement even a small part of its programs, is now dramatized by total economic chaos, a chaos which, from many points of view, is irreversible.

Only one thing still holds up this government, and it is the same thing that props up all puppet regimes: imperialism's dollars and the political alliance of the most backward sectors. The attempts to make a leader out of Duarte only add a touch of melodrama to a situation that is clearly untenable.

#### c) The Armed Forces

The bourgeois-imperialist scheme of January 1980,<sup>1</sup> based on an alliance of the Army with the Christian Democratic Party, the oligarchy and the U.S. government, did not come close to solving the contradictions that exist within the core of the Armed Forces. Instead, it created new conflicts and intensified the existing ones. The crisis of authority is rather apparent and is shown by the constant assassination attempts against democratic officers. The fact that members of the military have no recourse except gunfire for resolving their internal conflicts shows the crisis of authority to be so severe that there is no way to keep the Army moving together, down the same road.

Due to the intensification of contradictions within the Army, we have been able to observe more clearly the workings of this arm of the state. We see that the present Minister of Defense, Colonel Jose Guillermo Garcia, holds the key to maintaining unity within the Army while the key to political unity was divided between junta member Colonel Jaime Abdul Gutierrez and Colonel Arnoldo Majano. Clearly the conditions are not exactly favorable to resolving the crisis of authority. Colonel Majano was persecuted and, after several attempts on his life, was imprisoned.<sup>2</sup> This was

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<sup>1</sup>Editors' note: With the resignation of the progressives who had joined the junta in 1979, the second junta was modified to be headed by the Christian Democrat, Jose Napoleon Duarte; the progressive military officers were gradually replaced by fascists and conservatives.

<sup>2</sup>Editors' note: He was later released, and is now living in exile in Mexico.



intended to solve the crisis. But is there, in fact, an easy way out of this crisis? Is the problem so simple that the imprisonment of an officer will suffice to curtail a widespread democratic-technocratic movement within the Army?

Perhaps that would be the case if it were not for another fundamental issue. The FMLN is not only a political threat; it is above all a military threat. The U.S. government and certain big shots in the Christian Democratic regime openly recognize this, as demonstrated by the desperate and hurried manner in which the U.S. government has reinforced the genocidal junta militarily.

The point is that the "Salvadorean" Army is no longer capable of directing the war, strategically or tactically. With the January 10, 1981 general offensive, the FMLN gained the strategic offensive and all the bourgeois Army's attempts to regain it have resulted in major military defeats. This has had very far-reaching consequences; it leaves imperialism with no option other than intervention in order to try to defend a situation which is militarily indefensible. So imperialism converts the "Salvadorean" Army into a puppet army whose reins are held outside of the country; an army of occupation with its command center in the United States.

This clearly implies a reshuffling within the Army; making the armed forces into a U.S. puppet is a direct blow to those officers of the nationalist school of thought who uphold the motto "Salvation of the Homeland" and respect for the National Constitution. Thus, it isn't easy for the imperialists to transform the "Salvadorean" Army into a

puppet army without deepening contradictions that already exist.

Meanwhile, the alliance between the Army and the Alliance for Production has grown tighter. However, the latter group, with a view to recovering economic ground, supports fascism and genocide but without any reform measures. Thus the vicious circle is sealed and the door is shut on an already impossible situation. There is no "way out" except the open extermination of the Salvadorean people. The "Zimbabwe solution" is countered by the "Jakarta solution."<sup>3</sup>

#### d) The Christian Democratic Party

The Christian Democratic Party (PDC) has been reduced to a miniscule presence. Within it, a few personalities represent what would be entire sectors in other political parties. The present irreversible crisis, in dealing a blow to the ideological superstructure and thereby to the structures of the traditional political parties, has left its mark on the PDC. The "leadership" of Duarte is nothing but an expression of the most abject and treasonous sell-out--a

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<sup>3</sup>Editors' note: Each refers to a different response from the ruling powers to increasing support for liberation forces. In Zimbabwe, elections which resulted in the liberation forces peacefully taking power were the last step in negotiations with imperialism; it was a successful political settlement which followed ten years of military struggle. In Jakarta, Indonesia, as soon as the Communist Party showed any possibility for gaining popular support, the government, in collaboration with U.S. imperialism, wiped out hundreds of thousands of Communists and non-Communists alike.



systematic genocide designed to assure maintenance of the circuits of capital accumulation.

Attempts are made to counter Duarte's fascism with the "clean" image of one Fidel Chavez Mena (Minister of Foreign Relations), a man who strives for a political solution to the crisis that will salvage not only the capitalist aims, but above all the image of the PDC, which is now quite bloodstained and discredited by its perpetration of genocide in El Salvador.

Individuals and tiny groups within the PDC take various positions, all of them based on the most rabid anti-communism, and none of them with any potential for providing leadership; their activities are limited to infighting.

2. These are some of the key aspects of the present situation in El Salvador:

\*The U.S. Pentagon plays a decisive and definitive role in the inner workings of the "Salvadorean" Army.

\*The U.S. government plays a decisive role in determining the fire power of the "Salvadorean" Army against the FMLN forces.

\*The U.S. government determines the continuation of Duarte and the Christian Democratic government. However, the efforts of the World Christian Democratic Union and the Venezuelan regime to find a negotiated and cooperative way out continue, and are increasing as the FMLN-FDR forces become stronger and the junta weaker.

\*The U.S. government intends to strengthen the most unyielding faction of the Army in order to strike hard against the FMLN militarily and thereby have the upper hand in any negotiations. This is what underlies the diplomacy game.

\*The international situation is not favorable to a Vietnamization of the conflict; there are concrete pressures on Christian Democracy to find a political (negotiated) way out. This follows, in part, from a change that has occurred in the correlation of forces at the international level; certain powers that had supported the bourgeois imperialist aims of the genocidal junta are now reconsidering their positions.

\*The month of March (1981) could be decisive militarily. It is the month in which imperialism has proposed launching a large counter-offensive against the Salvadorean people and their vanguard.

## II. The International Situation

### 1. Imperialist Mobilization

The Reagan Administration has not found fertile ground in the Trilateral Commission for its warmongering position. The United States government has felt obliged to pressure and blackmail its allies in Germany and Japan. This pressure comes without prior consultation and if the U.S. government does consult them, it applies the threat of a "Soviet advance" in Central America.

The governments of Germany, France and England have not responded to the imperialist warmongering. On the



contrary, they have been extremely cautious, signifying that there is little fertile ground for direct imperialist intervention. Thus the Reagan Administration is left with the uncomfortable option of a unilateral intervention.

Since late February 1981, imperialism has tried to recover the political initiative by launching a widespread political-diplomatic offensive with various aims:

- a) To obtain the support, loyalty and commitment of its European and Latin American allies for its various plans.
- b) To launch a campaign against the USSR and the socialist camp.
- c) To reduce political-diplomatic support for the FMLN-FDR internationally by neutralizing certain parties or governments, and/or by recruiting new allies from sectors which are vacillating.

This is a huge political and diplomatic propaganda campaign that seeks to discredit the struggle of the Salvadorean people and win sympathy for the lost cause of the genocidal junta. It is not just a matter of trying to neutralize support, but involves stopping every kind of aid to the FMLN-FDR (weapons, humanitarian services for the refugees, money, etc.).

The campaign is therefore very broad and far-reaching and it convinces us that it is not just a question of defeating the FMLN-FDR militarily but of finding a definitive, long-term resolution.

- d) To launch a campaign of diversionary tactics to cover up and justify the increasing, direct military

intervention of the U.S. It isn't by chance that imperialist diplomatic tours have coincided with "Operation Black Falcon 4" in Panama and "Operation Readex 1-81" at Vieques Island off Puerto Rico.

- e) To gain time, politically and militarily, for a final defeat of the revolutionary-democratic movement in El Salvador.

- f) To alter the balance of forces within Central America on the basis of a broad strategy which includes aggression against Cuba.

The aims of this political-diplomatic offensive heighten international tensions. They make the situation in El Salvador first and foremost a "problem of national security" for the White House strategists; they provide imperialism with lots of room to manipulate by use of blackmail; they renew the Cold War. The socialist camp is pushed to respond to the path chosen by the imperialists, which could lead to a worldwide confrontation.

However, the fact that the U.S. government has not encountered support for intervention opens up the possibility of an international delegation which, through the United Nations, could reach a negotiated settlement of the conflict.

2. The Socialist International and the World Christian Democratic Union

Because of North American pressure and the correlation of forces on a worldwide level, we can expect changes (though not basic change) in the positions held by



certain governments and their local political parties. The firm support expressed by Willy Brandt, the contradictions within the Socialist International (Costa Rica, Italy), the struggles between the Socialist International and the Christian Democrats (Venezuela, Italy), and finally, the contradictions in the World Christian Democratic Union (Belgium, Holland, Honduras), make up a complex panorama in which it appears that the position favoring a political settlement is gaining ground.

Within the world Christian Democratic movement, positions have varied somewhat. There are sectors that persist in defending Duarte and his traitorous program while others express a range of positions from the deepest repudiation (Holland) to those who seek compromise formulas which at least exclude the genocidal Duarte.

In this area we must say that the victories achieved by the Popular Social Christian Movement (MPSC) in El Salvador, member of the FDR and represented on the Political Diplomatic Commission of the FMLN-FDR, have been invaluable.

### 3. The Movement of Non-Aligned Nations

The last meeting of ministers in New Delhi ratified the position of non-intervention in El Salvador held by the Movement of Non-Aligned Nations. There is a broad movement of countries which could form a wall of opposition to direct imperialist intervention. The FMLN-FDR greatly values the support of the Non-Aligned Nations. It considers

this body to be of special importance strategically, and will make every effort to become an active member of it.

### 4. Mexico, Brazil and the Andean Pact

The FMLN-FDR also values the courageous position taken by the Mexican government. The fact that President Jose Lopez Portillo refused to receive General Vernon Walters has special political and diplomatic repercussions that cannot be ignored. Brazil has adopted a cautious attitude, while within the Andean Pact nations, certain Venezuelan sectors are pushing for mediation. Ecuador's firm support of the FMLN-FDR has become somewhat more neutral as a result of internal problems generated by its conflicts with Peru.

### 5. The Central American Region

On a worldwide level, the imperialist efforts at direct military intervention have been relatively curtailed. For this reason, the United States government has no other alternative for now than to carry out only part of its interventionist plans through limited maneuvers within Central America:

- a) Military support by the Guatemalan government for the Army and government of El Salvador.
- b) U.S. military support for the Salvadorean Army from the Army and government of Honduras, including incursions into Salvadorean territory, attacks by the highly trained and



well-equipped Honduran Air Force on FMLN encampments and, in an extreme case, the permanent penetration of Honduran armed forces into El Salvador. The Honduran Minister of Defense himself, Colonel Flores Therezin, acknowledged that his army has about 4,000 troops stationed along the border. Needless to say, those troops aren't there on an outing...

c) Stimulating the activity of Somocista National Guards in Guatemala and Honduras, encouraging harassment and even an invasion of Nicaragua.

d) Encouraging a political, economic and diplomatic blockade of Nicaragua.

e) Activating the most fascist and backward groups in Costa Rica to persecute the anti-imperialist and opposition forces of that country.

f) Openly violating the Panama Canal Treaties and the autonomy of that nation. Pressuring and blackmailing the Panamanian government in order to force a change in its anti-imperialist and anti-interventionist policies, or neutralize it.

g) Bringing about fundamental changes in Central America and the Caribbean by destabilizing the progressive and democratic governments of the region.

### III. The March of History Never Stops

As we can see, the "El Salvador problem" has extended beyond the borders of that country and has been changed into a new focus of worldwide tension because of the imperialist-

oligarchic insistence on stopping the rise of forces that fight for a more just and democratic New Society. And the fact is that U.S. imperialism does not seem to learn the lessons of History. At every juncture, the various North American administrations have chosen to support the darkest and most backward forces. We have the examples of the open support of imperialism for Nguyen Van Thieu and Nguyen Cao Ky in Vietnam, for the Shah of Iran, for Somoza of Nicaragua, and for Batista of Cuba. And in all of those cases, the force of history prevailed and the old regimes based on oppression and exploitation were toppled by new revolutionary governments. Sooner or later the forces of change will take power in El Salvador. The position that the United States adopts will determine, in the end, whether our future relationship will be one of open hostility or good neighbors.

There is something which keeps imperialism from opening its eyes to the march of history: it is the steadfast, narrow bond that it inevitably maintains with the oppressive and exploitative forces of the dependent capitalist countries. This makes imperialism the number one public enemy of Humanity.

THE MARCH OF HISTORY NEVER STOPS...

EL SALVADOR WILL WIN!!!

Fernan Cienfuegos

El Salvador, April 1981



## THE PARA-CENTRAL FRONT "ANASTASIO AQUINO"

Anastasio Aquino, christened by the people "Anastasio Martyr," was born in Santiago Nonualco in mid-April, 1792.

He headed the 1833 indigenous uprisings of the Nonualco region: Santiago, San Juan and San Pedro; and the towns of Analco, Santa Maria Ostuma, Tecoluca and Zacatecoluca against the administration of Mariano Prado, who headed the Salvadorean state.

The Para-Central Front comprises the provinces of La Paz, San Vicente, and Cabañas. This front includes the majestic Chichontepec or San Vicente Volcano, a promontory of lava forming two peaks resembling the "V" of victory. The area of the volcano is an invulnerable encampment, despite its strategic disadvantage of being completely surrounded by highways.

Another zone of control of the FMLN is located in the north of San Vicente province, where there are cities such as San Lorenzo, bombed recently by the genocidal government army. Also, in the north of Cabañas province, our forces exert a tenacious control.

During the beginning of the Great General Offensive in mid-January, an action occurred in this front that was the first of its kind: the construction of a gigantic barricade of approximately 500 meters, an example of popular coordination, decision, and participation. This barricade of containment stopped the enemy forces from passing along the coastal highway for several days.



## OUR STRUGGLE IS FOR PEACE

**QUESTION:** What is the FMLN thinking of doing in regards to the decision of the U.S. government to first propose a military solution and then to support the elections?

**FERMAN CIENFUEGOS:** The U.S. government today is at the head of an adventure that is directed by the most fascist circles of the Reagan Administration. The U.S. Pentagon today controls the Salvadorean Army from the military point of view, not only through technical dependence and the sending of resources and provisions, but also by tactical, strategic and operative control of the high command and intermediate levels of the military commands of the Army.

That control led them to test their luck and to attempt to seize a short-term military victory between May and August of 1981 in order to overcome the first military obstacle, which is our Active Resistance in all the fronts, and in order to be able to propose that once "pacification" is obtained, they would then move to support the alternative of an electoral solution. Our response to this adventure, which will be defeated, is to combat U.S. imperialism in all the fields of revolutionary struggle. We are clear about not falling into the trap of accepting a direct military confrontation between U.S. imperialism and the FMLN. We as a people are going to teach a lesson to this superpower which we will beat and defeat in political-military battles. The U.S. government will suffer a political-diplomatic defeat



in the world arena. The U.S. will have to accept that their reformist plan, sustained by the Christian Democrats and the fascist sector of the Armed Forces, is a failure. The U.S. will have to accept that it could not defeat us militarily in the battlefields. The U.S. will have to accept that it is necessary to respect the sovereignty and the self-determination of peoples. Finally, U.S. imperialism will have to accept that warmongering is repudiated worldwide and it will have to accept that our struggle is for peace.

Q: The junta's refusal to accept international mediation—what results could it have?

FC: The refusal of Colonel Garcia, Colonel Gutierrez and Jose Napoleon Duarte shows once again intentions of prolonging this war with the goal of obtaining a military victory over the FMLN. Likewise, they set a trap by saying that only a military solution is possible in El Salvador and that it is necessary to accept that solution for the good of Western democracy. Thus, according to them, once the evil of communism is eradicated in El Salvador, it will be possible to tranquilly put on an electoral show. The refusal to accept mediation has sunk the junta deeper at the international level; it isolates it more and gains world repudiation.

At the same time, it makes the democratic parties see the reality of the adventure of Duarte and his pals. It also reveals to the national sectors, to whom they promised a rapid military victory over the FMLN, that this hasn't happened. Indeed, the national sectors that are not linked to

imperialism are beginning to look for their own solutions, some groups of the bourgeoisie are beginning to conspire against others, including groups in the Christian Democratic Party; in synthesis, chaos. The chaos brings a search for solutions within the spheres of power.

Q: Do you believe that elections can be held in March of '82?

FC: The high command of the junta's Army is committed, along with the U.S. government, to pacifying the country through genocidal means. The high command won't take a step backwards now and hopes in its campaign from May to August (of 1981) to use all of its artillery and firepower to exterminate the population. After this pacification they would use the Central Council for Elections in order to call elections for March of '82.

We say that this electoral solution will little by little fall apart because no one can believe that free elections could be held with the same genocidal men of '72 and '771 in power. With such precedent, these elections cannot be held, given that the genocidal men are not in favor of any political solution. At the same time, we believe that their scheme of "pacification and then elections" does not have any possibility of succeeding.

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1. Editors' note: These were the years of the preceding electoral frauds.



Q: How does the FMLN strike back at the military counter-offensive of the Army and the junta?

FC: After the January 10th offensive, the Army designed a strategy that we can divide into three operational phases. The first phase of the Army's campaign had the objective of containing the FMLN's offensive. The duration of this strategic containment was from January 25th to the middle of March. The second phase began in March, with the objective of culminating with a military victory in Guazapa and Morazan, and they cannot hide its failure. In the third phase, which they projected for May to August, they are attempting to fight the decisive battles in order to claim victory and to affirm that they have won the war.

This strategy has not been able to attain any of its military objectives because it encountered the Active Resistance of the FMLN's war fronts: the fronts attacked troops on the move, carried out 261 military actions including ambushes, harrassments, occupations, acts of sabotage--all of this in the month of February; 345 operations in March and 228 operations in April.

Q: What is the prospect for a popular victory?

FC: There is no doubt that the war tends to be prolonged by the intervention of the U.S. government; therefore we will have to consolidate international solidarity, making an equal effort to strengthen the monolithic unity of the FMLN as the guarantee of victory, disclosing more our military campaigns,

intensifying mobile warfare, strengthening the pluralistic alliance with the FDR, taking new qualitative leaps in the FMLN's military campaigns, and convincing the social sectors that are not now in the FDR that there are possibilities of working together on the points of agreement.

Difficult months are ahead for the enemy, because we are entering a new revolutionary moment that will be witness to the qualitative leaps taken by the FMLN in the struggle together with our people to achieve our definitive national liberation.

El Salvador, May 1981



## THE EASTERN FRONT "FRANCISCO SANCHEZ"

Francisco Sanchez was a peasant leader in the insurrection of 1932.

The Eastern Front is comprised of the provinces of Usulután, San Miguel, La Unión, and Morazan. This front is divided into the Northeastern and the Southeastern Fronts. The first has its main center in an extensive zone of control located in the north of Morazan province, from which the FMLN's "Radio Venceremos" is broadcast with the effect of a cannon. The southeastern part consists of three pockets located along the coastal area: one near the city of La Unión that has as its geographical center the volcano of Conchagua, another located in the chain of hills of Jacuarán-Intipuca, and the last to the northeast of Jiquilisco Bay, surrounding the coastal highway.

This is one of the most consolidated fronts, not only militarily but also politically. In northern Morazan, the construction and consolidation of popular power are very advanced. There are many signs of this new power: the operation of the FMLN radio

organized production, the maintenance of encampments where weapons-making shops exist, field hospitals, the conduction of literacy campaigns, and on-going religious services with a chaplain to direct them.



## STATEMENTS FROM FERMAN CIENFUEGOS TO THE INDEPENDENT PRESS AGENCY (AIP)

SAN SALVADOR, July 18 (AIP)—"The proposed elections in El Salvador would have no validity whatsoever, nor would they give the junta a democratic license, because the elections wouldn't have any objective effect on national policy and because the regime lacks popular and social support for those elections," according to Commander Ferman Cienfuegos, member of the FMLN General Command, speaking to an AIP war correspondent. The guerrilla leader emphasized that the speech by the assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs, Thomas Enders, "constitutes a new proof that the power which directly and openly shapes Salvadorean politics is the U.S. government, which maintains the dictatorship in power."

Regarding the elections which Enders spoke about last Thursday, Ferman Cienfuegos asserted that "the plan designed by Washington contemplates the holding of elections even though the FMLN's war fronts still exist. Nevertheless," he remarked, "they are planning on arriving at election time with a prior military victory. And if they do not achieve that victory, they will find themselves in a predicament that would lead them to a fascist coup in order to avoid a total political failure."

Regarding the military situation, the member of the FMLN General Command emphasized that none of the three big army campaigns "has been able to engage the strategic



forces of the guerrillas or dislodge them from their war fronts." Ferman Cienfuegos added that the FMLN has moved from "strict defense of its territories to the consolidation of its battlelines and the consolidation of mobile warfare in the whole country." The insurgent leader declared that the gains of the guerrilla forces in the military field were due to the "generalized weakening of the enemy and the growth in strength and experience on the part of the FMLN."

Referring to the situation of the Salvadorean armed forces, Cienfuegos indicated that "even when a unity of command is maintained, there is a political division in the heart of the army." The guerrilla commander emphasized that "without achieving a military victory, and lacking the prospect for victory, the high command is losing its credibility."

The Salvadorean revolutionary said that with all the military and material aid that the U.S. has given it, "the junta's Army has practically reached the peak of its capacity. This," he emphasized, "forces them to receive more North American advisers, which means the greater complicity of the U.S. government in the situation of El Salvador, and increases the submission of the Salvadorean military to Washington. If this were to continue, the situation would lead to open and direct intervention."

Cienfuegos said, "That kind of North American intervention is not a simple matter of decision on their part, since at this time there is an international opposition to that type of maneuver. Every day the correlation of forces is tipping against U.S. imperialism."

"Furthermore, Washington does not see the problem of El Salvador in an isolated context, but in the context of all Central America, the Caribbean and South America. Any interventionist attitude would mean paying the price of regionalizing the conflict," said the commander.

He affirmed that the junta's armed forces are helped by military advisers and mercenaries from South Korea, Israel, Chile and Argentina.

In reference to the position of International Christian Democracy, Cienfuegos emphasized that at various times the FMLN "has made public appeals to the different parties affiliated with that tendency to investigate for themselves the situation that prevails in El Salvador."

The insurgent leader ended by saying that "the complicity of the Venezuelan Christian Democrats (in the Salvadorean conflict) affects their internal politics and will seriously harm their electoral possibilities."





## FMLN-FDR PROPOSAL FOR FINDING A POLITICAL SOLUTION TO THE SITUATION OF EL SALVADOR\*

The Farabundo Marti Front for National Liberation and the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FMLN-FDR) hereby direct ourselves to the international community and the peoples of the world insofar as we consider the United Nations Organization to be an expression of the principles of peace, justice and equality among States and peoples. Therefore, it is an appropriate forum to present the aspirations of the Salvadorean people and their representative organizations, the FMLN and the FDR.

In the first place, we wish to express our gratitude for the multiple expressions of solidarity received throughout our struggle, both from governments and political, social and religious organizations, and well-known personalities throughout the world. We particularly want to express our gratitude for the solidarity given by the governments and peoples of Mexico and France, that have recognized our Fronts as politically representative forces. Likewise, we want to thank the great majority of the countries that make up the international community for their expressions and initiatives in favor of a political solution.

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\*This proposal was presented on October 7, 1981, before the United Nations General Assembly by Commander Daniel Ortega Saavedra, Coordinator of the Nicaraguan Junta of National Reconstruction.

If today our people are waging an armed struggle under the leadership of its organizations, the FMLN and the FDR, this is because oppressive and repressive regimes have closed all peaceful avenues for change, thus leaving our people with only armed struggle as the sole and legitimate means to attain their liberation, thereby exercising the universal and constitutional right to revolt against illegal and repressive authorities.

Our struggle is, therefore, a just and necessary struggle to build peace and equality among all the Salvadorean people.

However, our desire is peace. To attain it we propose a political solution whose objective is to put an end to the war and establish a new political and economic order that will guarantee the Salvadorean people the full exercise of their rights as citizens and a life worthy of human beings.

All this entails our expressed willingness to start a dialogue with the civilian and military representatives that the Junta may appoint through a process of peace talks.

We propose that these peace talks which reaffirm our commitment to seek and implement a political solution be based on the following general principles:

1. The talks should be carried out between the delegates appointed by the FMLN-FDR and representatives of the Government Junta of El Salvador.
2. They should be carried out in the presence of other governments, that as witnesses will contribute to the solution of the conflict.
3. The nature of the talks must be comprehensive and include the fundamental aspects of the conflict. They must be based on an agenda established by both parties.



4. The Salvadorean people should be informed of the entire process.
5. They should be initiated without pre-established conditions by either party.

In an effort to establish a basis that will guarantee a political solution, the FMLN-FDR hereby express our willingness to discuss the following points:

A. Definition of a new political, economic and judicial order that will allow and stimulate the full democratic participation of the different political, social and economic sectors and forces, particularly those that have been marginalized. Elections will be an important element as a mechanism of popular participation and representation.

B. The restructuring of the Armed Forces, based on the officers and troops of the current army who are not responsible for crimes and genocide against the people, and integration of the hierarchy and troops of the FMLN.

Our Fronts consider elections a valid and necessary instrument of expression of the people's will whenever conditions and atmosphere exist that allow the people to freely express their will. In El Salvador today we do not have those conditions to carry out an electoral process, inasmuch as the regime's repressive apparatus which assassinates political and labor leaders and activists remains untouched; it persists in persecuting the progressive sectors of the Church and is responsible for the daily physical elimination of dozens of citizens; likewise the regime has currently in effect a

state of siege, martial law and press censorship and is escalating the war against the people with arms and advisers sent by the Government of the United States.

A political solution is necessary for our people for the stability of the region, and for the maintenance of peace and security among nations. This implies that governments should scrupulously observe the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other peoples. This is why we are directly addressing the Government of the United States and demanding an end to its military intervention in El Salvador, which is against the interests of both the Salvadorean and American peoples and endangers the peace and security of Central America.

Our proposal responds to the demands for justice which are in line with the purest principles of international law, and with the interests of the nations and peoples of the world searching for peaceful solutions to points of tension. To this effect, the Salvadorean people express their confidence in the understanding, participation and support of the international community in the attainment of their right to peace, freedom and independence.

Unified Revolutionary Directorate  
of the Farabundo Marti Front for  
National Liberation (FMLN)

Executive Committee of the  
Democratic Revolutionary Front  
(FDR)



# LETTER FROM THE GENERAL COMMAND OF THE FMLN TO RONALD REAGAN

El Salvador, January 18, 1982

Mr. Ronald Reagan  
President of the United States of America

Mr. President:

We have carefully read your New Year's message to the American people in which you mention the measures you have taken to achieve world peace and in which you specifically say: "...our hearts feel anguished for those who suffer oppression...and we, the American people, begin the year with renewed commitment to our ideals and with the faith that peace shall be preserved and that liberty for all men must prevail."

We would like to point out, Mr. President, that we Salvadoreans have suffered centuries of oppression and at present we are suffering the repression perpetrated by the military dictatorship which has been in power for over fifty years. Our struggle is against that dictatorship, and if your heart is truly anguished by oppression, we see no sense in the fact that precisely your Administration has become the chief supporter of the military-Christian Democratic regime in El Salvador and that far from contributing to the freedom of the Salvadorean people, your Administration has decided to support a regime which is responsible for the death of over 30,000 people in a short period of two years.

What kind of world peace are you searching for if at the same time you are providing military assistance to an oppressive government? The military and political assistance your government provides the Salvadorean Junta has caused, among other things, that the war be long and that the most repressive elements of the Salvadorean Army enshrine themselves in power; these people do not even hold any respect for U.S. citizens, as demonstrated by the assassinations of the four churchwomen. The recent decision to train 1,600 members of the Junta's Army in the United States confirms to us that your objective is not peace but war against our people.

Your Administration has not only sent war materiel and military advisers to the Junta, but is also participating in designing and implementing the military strategy of extermination against our people. This is precisely what Under-Secretary of Defense Ike declared in his recent hearing before the Senate Sub-Committee on Western Hemisphere Affairs.

By means of this "scorch-earth" strategy, the civilian population has become a military target, especially those civilians living near the war fronts, without regard for their sex, creed, or condition as non-combatants. This is the painful experience gathered in numerous massacres; just a month ago, from December 7 to December 17, 1981, in Morazan province, the Salvadorean Armed Forces deliberately killed more than 1,000 peasants. Women, children, and the elderly had their throats slit, were machine-gunned down and burned alive by the Atlacatl Brigade, which



has been trained and equipped through your Administration's military assistance program. The Salvadorean people admire the commitment to progress and democracy of the American people, but do not understand why you are engaged in supporting a genocidal government. The Salvadorean people do not understand why the contributions of U.S. taxpayers are being used to exterminate them instead of helping them achieve peace and respect for human rights.

Trying to define the Salvadorean conflict in terms of the confrontation between your government and the Soviet Union seems to us totally detached from reality. It is misery and the repression imposed by the oligarchy and the military which makes thousands of Salvadoreans involve themselves in the struggle. We are not fighting with arms in our hands because we want war, but because successive regimes have closed all democratic channels for change and have forced us to exercise our legitimate right to insurrection.

It is us, the Salvadoreans, and only the Salvadoreans who are fighting every day against the dictatorship in order to change old and unjust structures. The 30,000 people killed are not Russians, nor Cubans; they are Salvadoreans who strive to live in peace and dignity. The only foreign forces that participate in the conflict are the U.S. advisers sent by your government. Therefore, to see our war as part of the East-West confrontation can only lead to the regionalization of the war and to the increasing intervention of your country, thus bringing more suffering to the Salvadorean people and also to the American people.

Furthermore, to claim that the March 1982 elections are the solution to the Salvadorean conflict is also far from reality. How can a democratic process be guaranteed amid indiscriminate repression? If you can decide the destiny of the United States, it is because you are in power as a result of free elections. U.S. citizens participated in elections in time of peace, an indisputable condition for the people to elect their government. The Salvadorean government, far from creating the necessary conditions to achieve peace, is launching a war of extermination against our people. Thus, the March elections are not the solution to the Salvadorean conflict. They are yet another farce like those that the military dictatorship is accustomed to imposing on our people.

Mr. President, the confidence you express in your message to preserve world peace must be expressed in tangible facts. In El Salvador, our Farabundo Marti Front for National Liberation has made public a generous offer for peace talks which would lead to the end of the war and to the construction of a just and democratic order for all Salvadoreans. The international community in its majority has supported this proposal for a political settlement, as demonstrated by the Franco-Mexican declaration and the resolution recently adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 16, 1981.

Our proposal involves a comprehensive negotiation and our disposition to undertake such a negotiation at any time, without pre-conditions placed on any of the parties in conflict. It also involves setting up an agenda for discussions



to be agreed upon by both sides, the participation of government representatives from other countries as witnesses, and providing the Salvadorean people with the necessary information regarding the process of political settlement. This is our contribution to peace in El Salvador and the region. Unfortunately, to this moment, we have witnessed the opposition of your Administration to a political settlement.

As a result of the aforementioned considerations, we hereby make a respectful request for a change in your policy towards El Salvador. We are only demanding our right to solve our problems on our own without foreign intervention. If this new year your government has the interest and the will to bring about world peace, you have the opportunity in El Salvador not only to contribute to peace by not opposing a political settlement, but to establish friendly relations among our peoples.

Sincerely,

*Fernán Cienfuegos*  
Fernán Cienfuegos

*J. Villalobos*  
Joaquín Villalobos

*Roberto Roca*  
Roberto Roca

*Shafick Jorge Handal*  
Shafick Jorge Handal

*Salvador Cayetano Carpio*  
Salvador Cayetano Carpio

# EL SALVADOR: THE U.S. FACES DANGER It Comes From Escalated Intervention, Not From Coalition\*

SAN SALVADOR—"On various occasions, in an effort to justify the intervention of the United States in El Salvador, Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig, Jr. has declared that the Salvadoran opposition coalition, the FMLN, is the advance guard of Soviet-Cuban expansionism, and of Nicaraguan as well. This is an effort to create a war psychosis and raise the specter of a threat to the national security and vital interests of the United States.

The FMLN (Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front) has declared that its policy toward the United States is to create the basis of friendly relations and mutual respect. The coalition government that will be installed in El Salvador in no way represents a threat to the security of the United States, no danger to its vital interests, because the coalition government will be the unified expression of various political forces of differing ideologies and national political tendencies. It will be a non-aligned government, under pressure from no global power. This is why we insist that it represents no danger to the United States: We intend to install a sovereign and independent government that represents all our national interests.

The real danger is for the United States to become involved in an escalated intervention in El Salvador. This

\*Published in the Los Angeles Times on March 5, 1982, and translated by Juan M. Vasquez, a staff writer for the Times.



raises the prospect that the entire Central American region will become engulfed in complex social conflict. U.S. participation in this struggle would not carry the support of American citizens, because, among other things, it would create a wave of conflict reaching all the way to Mexico, Panama and even South America. The reaction of the people of Latin America--and of the people of the United States, we are sure--would be of solidarity with the people of El Salvador. Already, popular groups in several nations have proposed the creation of international brigades to help our struggle in case of intervention by the United States.

The logic of continued military aid to El Salvador will inevitably lead to the same mechanical escalation that occurred in Vietnam. Providing A-37 warplanes to the junta will lead to the same aerial bombardment of the civilian population as in Indochina, marking an important new step toward direct intervention by U.S. troops.

What Haig never points out is that his adventurist pretensions have been opposed by governments all over the world. European governments have rejected the idea of intervention, and even the Organization of American States has declared that it will not support any type of intervention.

We express our willingness to offer the United States a political resolution to this bloody conflict. It is the government of the President of the United States that rejects a negotiated outcome and increases military aid instead.

The political solution hinges on the attitude of the United States, because its role in El Salvador is not merely military; its advisers design the strategy of genocide, but it is

also the principal political supporter of the government and the chief financial backer of the March 28 elections. Instead, the United States should use its influence positively to lead the way toward a peaceful solution between the parties at war.

We can say with certainty that the search for a lasting peace in El Salvador, and thus in Central America, depends on the United States. The FMLN represents not only a large sector of the people in El Salvador but also large geographic areas that are under its control and a decisive military force as well.

The people of the United States can rest assured that the FMLN is a force that can contribute to the peace of the region. The real risk for the United States and its vital interests consists of escalated intervention in El Salvador and continued support of the Christian Democratic junta led by Jose Napoleon Duarte and General Jose Guillermo Garcia."

Fernan Cienfuegos



Attachment**The Joint Franco-Mexican Declaration on El Salvador**

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mexico, the Honorable Jorge Castaneda, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, the Honorable Claude Cheysson, have held exchanges of views on the current situation in Central America.

The two Ministers wish to express the deep concern of their Governments over the sufferings of the Salvadorean people in the present situation, which is a source of potential danger for the stability and peace of the entire region, in view of the risks that the crisis may become international.

They are therefore making the following declaration:

Convinced that it is for the Salvadorean people alone to find a just and durable settlement of the profound crisis through which the country is passing, thus bringing to an end the plight of the population;

Aware of their responsibility as members of the international community and guided by the purposes and principles of the United Nations;

Taking into account the extreme gravity of the current situation and the need for fundamental social, economic and political changes;

The governments of France and Mexico recognize that the alliance of the Farabundo Marti



APPENDIX



Front for National Liberation and the Democratic Revolutionary Front constitutes a representative political force, prepared to assume obligations and to exercise the rights that derive therefrom. Consequently, it is legitimate that the alliance should participate in instituting the mechanisms of rapprochement and negotiation required for a political settlement of the crisis;

Recall that it is for the Salvadorean people to initiate a global political settlement process in which a new internal order will be established, the armed forces will be reorganized, and the conditions will be created for insuring compliance with the popular will, as expressed through genuinely free elections and other mechanisms of a democratic system;

Appeal to the international community to work, particularly in the framework of the United Nations, to ensure the protection of the civilian population according to the applicable international norms and to facilitate the rapprochement of the representatives of the conflicting Salvadorean political forces, in order that there may be reconciliation in El Salvador and any intervention in its internal affairs may be averted.

(Signed) Jacques LEPRETTE (Signed) Porfirio MUNOZ LEDO  
Permanent Representative of Permanent Representative of  
France to the United Nations Mexico to the United Nations

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**FMLN**

**EL SALVADOR, CENTRAL AMERICA**